

Congressman Paul A. Gosar

Floor Speech

Gosar Amendment #144—Reducing Funds from Amounts Appropriated
by the Committee to USDA’s Office of General Counsel
*Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related
Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015*

Mr. Chairman (or Madam Chair), I have an amendment at the desk.

[The Clerk will report]

[Amendment X offered by Mr. Gosar of Arizona—(reads)]

[The Gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.]

Mr. Chairman (or Madam Chair),

I rise to offer another amendment to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

This amendment pertains to the Department of Agriculture’s Office of the General Counsel.

By way of background, this office was appropriated \$41,202,000 in Fiscal Year 2014.

The President’s Budget for FY 15 requested a **steep** increase of \$6,365,000.

The President attempts to justify this 15.4 percent increase by saying that these monies will go toward, quote:

“31 [full-time equivalents] to handle an increased workload, to support current staff, rent, and enhance, OGC’s information technology reporting capabilities and litigation management tools.”

In other words, most of that money would be used to both **hire more** government attorneys, and to **give raises** to government attorneys already on staff.

You see, because I am from the Western United States, I take issue with that.

I represent a rural district in Western Arizona, and I serve on the House Natural Resources Committee, which oversees much of the executive branch’s activities with regard to resources and lands.

I am quite familiar with the effects government attorneys often have on States, their resources, and their lands; and my colleagues and I are generally disgusted with the overreaching policies the Obama Administration has imposed on the Western States.

Therefore, I oppose any plans by the Department to hire more government attorneys, many of which will be used to implement and defend the Administration’s overreaching land grabs, water grabs, and climate change policies.

I appreciate that the Committee decided not fulfill the President’s request in full, but it did propose appropriating roughly half of his request.

I simply cannot, in good conscience, allow more attorneys to be hired at USDA—attorneys who will infringe upon many states’ Tenth Amendment rights.

My amendment proposes to cut **most** of the increase the Appropriations Committee has offered in this bill, but to leave a portion of the increase

for the sole purpose of improving information technology at the Office of General Counsel.

I understand the federal government generally has major issues with information technology.

Our departments and agencies are often using archaic IT systems and many should be updated for efficiency and security purposes.

IT issues are often highlighted at my other Committee assignment at the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

This is a bipartisan issue that has been addressed regularly by Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and the rest of my colleagues.

To close, I ask my colleagues to support this amendment.

It would help to preserve States' rights, curb executive branch overreach, cut spending, and improve information technology systems all at once.

As always, I appreciate the work of the Committee, particularly the work of the Chair and Ranking Member.

I urge passage of my commonsense amendment, and with that, I yield back.